

**EN122: Modes of Reading
2014-2015**

Assessed Essay 1 for Part Year Visiting Exchange and Erasmus Students

Write a 3000 word essay in answer to ONE of the topics listed below. You should normally make reference to both primary and secondary sources. Pay special attention to organization and conceptual clarity in your work. All sources used must be referenced using MLA Style. You are welcome to discuss your essay with your tutor in one of their office hours but your tutor cannot read and comment on a draft.

Please make sure you have read carefully all of the information provided on the 'Assessment' and 'Assessed Essays' web pages BEFORE proceeding with your essay.

1. 'The social order, our culture, want it this way: the mother must remain forbidden, excluded' (Luce Irigaray). Examine the representation of mothers and mother figures in *The Magic Toyshop*.
2. Analyse the representation of sex and gender in *The Magic Toyshop*, with reference to one or more of the theorists studied this term.
3. Women's lives are governed by a 'paradox of their situation: they belong at one and the same time to the male world and to a sphere in which that world is challenged; shut up in their world, surrounded by the other, they can settle down nowhere in peace' (de Beauvoir). Examine the ways in which *The Magic Toyshop* engages with this statement.
4. At its obscenity trial, Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* was adjudged to have 'redeeming social importance'. Assess this verdict in light of how you may define 'redeeming social importance'. Is there evidence in the poem to support a reading along these lines? Is "redeeming social importance" a condition of our enjoyment of the work as poetry?
5. How useful is the label 'typewriter jazz' in assessing the sound and rhythm of Ginsberg's 'Howl'?
6. In 'Art as Technique', Viktor Shklovsky mentions the ideas of habituation and defamiliarisation. Discuss to what extent these terms can be applied to *Howl*. How does *Howl* defamiliarise us through its style? What are the limits of its defamiliarisation?
7. 'I'm in the demythologising business' (Angela Carter). What is being 'demythologised' in either *The Magic Toyshop* or *Howl*? What techniques and devices are being employed in the process, and what is their impact?
8. 'It was as if he had put on the quality of maleness like a flamboyant cloak' (*The Magic Toyshop*). With close reference to *The Magic Toyshop* and/or *Howl* examine the notion of gender as performance.
9. Examine the ways in which Carter and Ginsberg explore and exploit the conventions of the *Bildungsroman*. How do their engagements with this form differ?

10. Is the author dead? Who killed him/her? Discuss with reference to Foucault and Barthes and one or more of the literary texts studied this term.
11. 'Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts' (Marx and Engels). Consider how (and how successfully) normative ideologies are challenged in any *two* texts (which may include theoretical texts) studied this term.
12. 'There have always been those uncertain, poetic beings, who have not let themselves be reduced to the state of coded mannequins' (Hélène Cixous). Explore and interpret this statement with reference to *The Magic Toyshop* and/or *Howl*.